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ABSTRACT

Reasons for employee resistance to change are listed and described. Six steps for the supervisor to take to initiate change are listed and described. Graphics and handouts list reasons for resistance to change and steps to bring about change in work groups. (NF)

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

NO. III-7-24

COMMERCE SUPERVISORY COURSE

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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ABOUT THE DISCUSSION GUIDES

The study of supervisory processes and practices has been going on for many, many years, and practical knowledge of experience based supervisory activities continues to increase. These discussion guides provide ideas, concepts, and approaches to the supervisory function that capture the experience of successful supervisors in the Federal Government.

These guides, covering the major processes of the Government supervisor, are in response to the need for basic supervisory training materials that can be used in the instruction and training of supervisors throughout the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Each discussion guide may be used separately or in concert with other guides. Latitude is provided in the design to tailor the subject matter to the needs of the respective bureaus of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

These guides were developed by a Task Force composed of representatives of the various Bureaus of the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Office of the Secretary. Their background and experience reflects a variety of professional and technical specialties within the Department.

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The discussion guide on the subject Overcoming Resistance to Change was the task assignment of Edward A. McCaw, Office of the Secretary.

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U. S. Department of Commerce

COMMERCE SUPERVISORY COURSE

SESSION III-[illegible]-24
OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Office of Personnel
Office of the Secretary

U. S. Department of Commerce
Commerce Supervisory Course

SESSION III-7-24
OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

OBJECTIVE OF SESSION

The purpose of this session is to provide participants with a greater perception of the forces that cause employees to resist change and to increase their understanding of individual and group behavior in a period of transition.

TIME REQUIRED --- 2½ hours

PREVIEW

This session provides the supervisor with an awareness of his role as the initiator in the change process. It stresses the fact that employees' reactions to change so often depend upon how the change is presented to them, and how that change is presented to them is completely under the supervisor's control. Particular interest may be expected in the discussion of the essential elements of supervisory responsibility in the change process.

MATERIALS:

Blackboard or Easel with Chart Paper
16 mm Sound Projector and screen

FILM:

"Men At Work" produced by National Film Board of Canada. Available from Harvard University, Audio Visual Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts. (Rent or Sale)

HANDOUTS:

III-7-24 H1
III-7-24 H2

GRAPHICS:

III-7-24 G1
III-7-24 G2

DISCUSSION GUIDE

SESSION: III-7-24 SUBJECT: OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

In this session we will explore the processes of interaction that leads to change in both individuals and groups.

HOW DO PEOPLE REACT TO CHANGE?

Bringing about change is perhaps attempted more often and yet less well understood, than anything else the supervisor does. How do people generally react to change? (Explore this question --- get various responses --- bring group out)

POINTS TO BRING OUT IN DISCUSSION

- People tend to resent change that is imposed upon them by other individuals or circumstances.
- Change is characteristic of every situation. It is part of every real endeavor where the efforts of people are concerned.

SITUATIONS HAVE BOTH A FUTURE AND A PAST

It is important to bear in mind that every situation has both a past and a future. It is very easy to become too involved in the present. People need time to adjust to changes that affect their future.

WHY?

Why do people resent change?

Bring out the following points in your discussion of question.

(1) FEAR OF ECONOMIC LOSS (THE 6 REASONS WHY PEOPLE RESIST CHANGE SHOULD BE PUT ON BLACKBOARD AS YOU PROGRESS FROM POINT TO POINT)

1. FEAR OF ECONOMIC LOSS

Potential loss of job, downgrading, transfer to another department requiring lower skills, loss of overtime - all pose threats to a feeling of economic security --- whether real or imaginary.

(2) UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES IN PAST

2. UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES IN PAST

Unfortunate experiences with past changes of a similar nature have a tendency to make some employees distrustful, suspicious, and apprehensive of future.

(3) LOSS OF STATUS

3. FEAR OF LOSS OF STATUS

Many people are afraid of losing status because a new job doesn't seem as demanding as the old one or that once valuable skills are no longer needed.

(4) CRITICISM IS IMPLIED

4. THEY FEEL THAT CRITICISM IS IMPLIED

This goes hand in hand with a feeling of loss of status --- The employee believes management is actually displeased in some way with his performance.

(5) THREAT TO EGO

5. THREAT TO THE EGO

The human ego sometimes creates an almost impenetrable barrier to the implementation of change --- People need to feel important and that what they are doing is important.

(6) FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

6. FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

People are generally comfortable in their present circumstance if work is predictable, know fellow employees, what is expected of them, etc. An impending change may raise questions about their situation in the future.

RESISTANCE LIKE INERTIA

This resistance to change as outlined in the above 6 items, is similar to the reaction one gets from driving a car - if the decision to turn a corner is made too fast --- there is resistance. Also, like inertia - the tendency of a body when in motion, to continue in the same direction until some outside force or object stops it. The principle is the same with human beings.

HOW CAN WE BEST OVERCOME THE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE?

Often it is easier to carry out a job if there is a specific plan to follow. When major changes are to be installed, careful planning and preparation are necessary for success. Here, then, are six steps that many successful supervisors have found helpful in initiating change.

SIX STEPS TO INITIATE CHANGE (LIST ON BLACKBOARD)	SIX STEPS TO INITIATE CHANGE
(1) GET READY TO SELL	1. GET READY TO SELL Use empathy -- What questions would I want answered if I was an employee? - What is reason for change? - Whom will it benefit and how? - Will training or retraining be necessary? - Will there be transfers or new groupings of employees? (Armed with the answers to these questions a supervisor can develop a plan to present the change)
(2) IDENTIFY SOURCES OF HELP	2. IDENTIFY SOURCES OF HELP Staff people can frequently be of great help in preparing to sell a change by explaining technical aspects and demonstrating new techniques. Enlist the aid of the informal leaders of your work group. Older employees should also be considered as a potential source of help in selling changes. Frequently younger employees will take their cue from the response of the old-timer.
(3) ANTICIPATE OBJECTIONS	3. ANTICIPATE OBJECTIONS Changes that upset routine, require new knowledge of skills or inconvenience people are bound to meet with some objections or resistance. Again, use empathy --- anticipate the objections.
(4) SELL BENEFITS	4. SELL BENEFITS Everyone is concerned with "What's in it for me?" The benefits should be put on as personal a level as possible.

(5) LISTERN IN DEPTH	5. LISTERN IN DEPTH Enployees have a right to be heard. If an employee is treated with respect, like an equal, he probably will respond in kind. You may even gain valuable ideas to improve the contemplated change. But above all, be sincere! Just don't go through the motions of listerning.
(6) FOLLOW-UP	6. FOLLOW-UP All plans must have a provision for follow-up or feedback. See that your promises to the employees have materialized. Remember, you might fool them once but the next time might be disaster.
SUPERVISOR MUST BE ENTHUSIASTIC AND MANAGEMENT-MINDED	In order to be successful in implementing the above plan (6 steps) the supervisor must at all times be enthusiastic about the change --- he must be management-minded!
BREAK?	(IF APPROPRIATE, GIVE GROUP 10 - 15 MINUTES BREAK.)
PASS OUT H.O. III - 7-24 - H1	Prior to showing the film "Men at Work" - The Trojan Washing Machine Company-handout outline of film which contains: - Characters - Synopsis - Main Issues - Suggested questions (to be handled as a small-group project after film) (Alert group to the fact, that they should keep the questions in-mind as they view the film and that they will work in small groups and answer the questions after the film has been shown.
SHOW FILM	SHOW FILM "MEN AT WORK" (28 minutes.) AFTER FILM:
BREAK IN GROUPS APPROX. 20 MINUTES	Break into small groups (approximately 4 participants each group) for 20 minutes (more or less)

Reconvene groups. Have spokesman present their group's solution to each question

NOTE: Do not have first group give answers to all six questions. Go from group to group --- keep moving --- avoid repetition.

Probe spokesmen for any additional comments you deem appropriate. Ask questions --- clear up fuzzy answers.

HANDOUT III - 7-24 - H2

Pass Handout III - 7-24 - H2 "Steps to Bringing About Change In Work Groups".

Let group read.

NOTE: Go over each point slowly --- answer any questions as you go along

SUMMARY

IN SUMMARY

- A supervisor's own attitudes are the key to how effective they are at initiating change. As members of management they have an obligation to support change with enthusiasm.

- People do resist change,but not automatically or universally. It is just as natural to want to improve as it is to resist change. Many times the difference between the two depends on whether or not the employee is involved in the implementation of the change.

REASON WHY PEOPLE RESIST

- The reasons why people resist change include the following:

  They fear economic loss
  They fear the unknown
  They fear loss of status
  They feel that criticism is implied
  They had unfortunate experiences with change
  Damage to ego

SIX STEPS TO INITIATING CHANGE

There are six steps to initiating change.

1. Get ready to sell
2. Identify sources of help
3. Anticipate objections
4. Sell benefits
5. Listern in depth
6. Follow-up

The foreseeable future will bring more and more change --- remember the supervisor is the key man in initiating change.

END OF SESSION.

U. S. Department of Commerce

C O M M E R C E
S U P E R V I S O R Y
C O U R S E

SESSION III-7-24
OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

GRAPHICS

GRAPHICS III-7-24-G1

WHY DO PEOPLE RESIST CHANGE?

1. FEAR OF ECONOMIC LOSS
2. UNPLEASANT PAST EXPERIENCES
3. FEAR OF LOSS OF STATUS
4. FEEL THAT CRITICISM IS IMPLIED
5. THREAT TO EGO
6. FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

GRAPHICS III-7-24-G2

HOW TO INITIATE CHANGE

1. GET READY TO SELL
2. IDENTIFY SOURCES OF HELP
3. ANTICIPATE OBJECTIONS
4. SELL BENEFITS
5. LISTEN IN DEPTH
6. FOLLOW-UP

U. S. Department of Commerce

COMMERCE SUPERVISORY COURSE

SESSION III-7-24
OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

HANDOUTS

HANDOUT III-7-24-H1

TROJAN WASHING MACHINE COMPANY

CHARACTERS (Appearing in Filmed Case)

OLI	Shop Steward
ART	Assembles base
SMINKA	Operates appending machine
MARY	Fastens tub to ringer post
HANK	Foreman
BUD	New man on assembly line
CLEM	Chief Steward
SUPER	Superintendent
PRESIDENT	Trojan Company
TEACHER	English Class
HARRIET & HUSBAND	Friends of Mary's
MARY'S HUSBAND	
WORKERS	

SYNOPSIS

Faced with the necessity of increasing production and introducing a new delux model in order to maintain a competitive position in the market, the management of the Trojan Washington Machine Company is forced to install a conveyor belt to speed up the production line. This picture attempts to show the disintegrating effect the installation of the conveyor belt has on, what has otherwise been a production line whose personnel enjoyed a congenial face to face relationship.

MAIN ISSUES

Administering technological change.
Disruption of group social structure.
Contrast for individuals between

(a) what they want from their work.
(b) ability to satisfy those needs on the job.

Relationship between, productivity - satisfaction - motivation.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

1. What was the original situation? Social structure? Management behavior?
2. What assumptions did management make in putting in the change?
3. What do you think of HOW the change was made?
4. What is the present situation? Social structure? Management behavior? Situation - (as it exists at end of film)
5. What could the company have done differently?
6. What can be done now?

HANDOUT III-7-24-H2

STEPS TO BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE IN WORK GROUPS

1. Look at yourself -- what change do you want and why?
2. Look at your employees -- what is each like, what will move them to change, how will they react to change?
3. Look at your organization -- what is its climate, how does the change fit managerial goals, what support and opposition will you get for this change? From where will support and opposition come?
4. What other factors in past history and current events affect the situation?
5. How can you initiate change, what restraining forces can you weaken, what driving forces strengthen, and when?
6. Orient individuals, group and management to change; build an accepting climate.
7. Let group and individuals try new way without penalties.
8. Allow time for adjustment to changes by individuals, group, and managers.
9. Reinforce new skills, knowledges, and attitudes in individuals, groups, and your bosses.
10. Reduce dependence of group on you, put individuals on their own.
11. Evaluate your effectiveness in handling change processes, the effect of the change on your relations with others, the effect of the change on your group and individuals in it, and the effect of the change on the quality and quantity of work done.

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